

This bill contains important provisions to regulate private security contractors, including nearly all of the provisions from H.R. 897, the Iraq and Afghanistan Contractor Sunshine Act, which I introduced in February to give Congress access to the basic information necessary for us to do our job of providing gravely needed oversight of private contractors. The Defense Authorization Act would give Congress access to information about contractors in Iraq and Afghanistan including a description of each contract, the value of each contract, the total number of personnel employed on contracts and the total number of contractors killed or wounded. I am happy to see these provisions from my legislation included in today's bill.

The series of lethal incidents involving private security contractors in Iraq over the past 2 months have made it crystal clear that we must provide oversight of private contractors. This National Defense Authorization Act would increase oversight by the Department of Defense and the Department of State by mandating that they create clear regulations to govern contractor conduct, investigate any violent incidents like the September 16th Blackwater shooting, and clarify contractors' use of force.

Further, any new contract signed 180 days after the bill is enacted would have to contain a clause saying that contractors must comply with the new regulations and that all contract personnel performing private security contracts understand that they must comply with U.S. laws and the laws of the host country, orders issued by the combatant command, rules on the use of force, and any investigation into violent incidents conducted by DOD. If they do not comply, their contract could be terminated. This will create a powerful tool that the United States could use to ensure that private security contractors follow the law and are held responsible for their actions.

The National Defense Authorization bill also goes a long way toward restoring troop readiness. It includes a badly needed 3.5 percent pay raise for servicemembers and prohibits increases in TRICARE and pharmacy user fees. The bill also includes the Wounded Warrior Act to address the problems experienced by wounded and injured servicemembers that became apparent earlier this year at Walter Reed.

I also support the increase in the number of visas for the brave Iraqis who have worked with the United States and have been targeted for their efforts.

While I cannot vote for the bill because it includes \$41.8 billion for the war in Iraq without a withdrawal deadline, I would like to thank Chairman SKELTON for addressing so many of my concerns about bringing accountability to private contracting and to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

RECOGNIZING DAVID LOUIS RELIC FOR ACHIEVING THE RANK OF EAGLE SCOUT

HON. SAM GRAVES

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 18, 2007

Mr. GRAVES. Madam Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize David Louis Relic, a very

special young man who has exemplified the finest qualities of citizenship and leadership by taking an active part in the Boy Scouts of America, and in earning the most prestigious award of Eagle Scout.

David has been very active with his troop, participating in many Scout activities. Over the many years David has been involved with Scouting, he has not only earned numerous merit badges, but also the respect of his family, peers, and community.

Madam Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending David Relic for his accomplishments with the Boy Scouts of America and for his efforts put forth in achieving the highest distinction of Eagle Scout.

INTRODUCTION OF A RESOLUTION CELEBRATING 35 YEARS OF SPACE-BASED OBSERVATIONS OF THE EARTH BY LANDSAT SPACE- CRAFT AND LOOKING FORWARD TO SUSTAINING THE LONGEST, CONTINUOUS RECORD OF CIVIL EARTH OBSERVATIONS OF THE LAND

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 18, 2007

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Madam Speaker, today I am introducing a House resolution to celebrate 35 years of space-based observations of the Earth by Landsat spacecraft, an accomplishment that has helped revolutionize our understanding of the Earth's land surface as well as enable a wide range of applications of Landsat data that have had significant societal benefits.

The Landsat program began with the launch of the first civilian Earth observation satellite on July 23, 1972, by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, NASA. The satellite, originally known as the Earth Resources Technology Satellite, was later renamed Landsat 1. Since the first Landsat satellite, five follow-on spacecraft have been successfully launched to continue the space-based collection of land data. This series of Landsat satellites has established the longest, unbroken record of data on the global land surface.

The extensive three and a half-decade record of Landsat data has allowed scientists to study changes to the Earth's land cover over time, including changes influenced by both human and natural causes. The applied uses of the data have served numerous purposes, including natural resource management, land use planning, cartography, and food security, to cite just a few examples.

The data collected through the Landsat program are being used by many Federal agencies including NASA, the Department of the Interior and its U.S. Geological Survey, the Department of State, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Defense, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Justice, the Department of Transportation, and the Department of Homeland Security and its Federal Emergency Management Agency, among others. In addition, academic institutions, State, county, and local governments, private industry, foreign governments, and non-governmental organizations are users of Landsat data. The broad application of these

data for scientific and societal benefit testifies to the Nation's sound investment in a public good.

My home State of Colorado has two companies that demonstrate the excellent commercial applications that have developed from the initial Federal investments made in space-based remote sensing exemplified by the Landsat program. DigitalGlobe in Longmont and GeoEye in Thornton have both become international leaders in the remote sensing fields.

I think it is important for this body to express our collective thanks to the many scientists, engineers, and program personnel who have contributed to Landsat's success over the past three and a half decades. As a result of their efforts, Landsat data has become an indispensable source for a host of beneficial applications that have improved our quality of life and enhanced our economic vitality. In addition, Landsat data are important scientifically. For example, the U.S. Climate Change Science Program has recognized the significance of the Landsat program, noting that "Landsat data are invaluable for studying the land surface and how it affects and is affected by climate."

However, while today's resolution recognizes the benefits we have accrued from past investments in the Landsat program, it is clear that more can be gained from this program in the years to come. I urge my colleagues to join me in ensuring that the benefits that are possible from civil space-based land observations, as well as from commercially available remote sensing systems, continue to be realized. By supporting the research, technology, education, and tools required to improve Landsat data collection and applications, we can look forward to further scientific advancements and societal benefits from this critical national asset.

Madam Speaker, in closing, I again want to salute all those who helped make Landsat possible and who work to maintain its continued successful operation, and I hope that my colleagues will join me in supporting this resolution.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOHN R. CARTER

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 18, 2007

Mr. CARTER. Madam Speaker, on December 17, 2007, I was unable to be present for two rollcall votes due to technological complications with my vote notification system.

If present, I would have voted accordingly on the following rollcall votes: rollcall No. 1163—"aye"; rollcall No. 1164—"aye."

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. ELTON GALLEGLY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 18, 2007

Mr. GALLEGLY. Madam Speaker, I was unable to make the following rollcall votes on December 17, 2007:

H. Res. 856, Resolution expressing heartfelt sympathy for the victims and families of the